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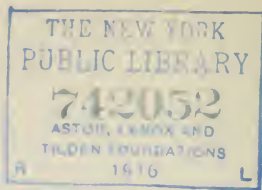
When Thou Hast Shut Thy Door.

A Book for
the Still Hour.

By
Amos R. Wells.

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY,
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J. F. M.



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1. On the Duty of Joy.



CHRIST, who dost bid me not to let my heart be troubled, I believe in God and in thee. Let thy joy be in me, and let it be fulfilled. Fulfilled in the presence of failure, if thou didst send the failure, and my own folly did not invite it. Fulfilled in sickness, if the great Physician bestows the sickness in order to heal me. Fulfilled in loneliness, if the solitude is crowded with thee. Fulfilled even in death, when death is the shadow of thy light. Wherever I turn my weeping eyes, thy loving face is a tender reproach. Wherever my unfaithful tears may fall, they spoil some waiting blessing. I mourn over my sins in such wise that the mourning is an added sin. I grieve at my poor service of God and of man, and that grief hinders my service. I sorrow at my paltry growth—a growth that sorrow dwarfs and joy enlarges. More bravely, heart of mine, confront your tasks and your troubles. Rest the past on your Saviour, and begin from him the future. Go with him, and your sins and griefs are gone. Blessed Lord, who dost die in my deaths, take me into thy resurrection life. I will forget failure and gloom; I will forget duty, even the duty of joy; and I will learn privilege. Speed me on thy errands so swiftly that I shall have no time for moodiness. Take me into thy joy so completely that I shall not even consider whether I am joyful. And all through no grace of my own, but out of thy love that has promised and never has failed.

2. On Procrastination.



LET me not put off till tomorrow the happiness God means for to-day. I have postponed the serving of friends, until my friends have gone. I have put off the completion of tasks, until the work was no longer needed. I have pushed from me rest and leisure, until both became distasteful to me. I have set for love a more convenient season, but when it came love had disappeared. I have bade my life await me in more spacious rooms ahead; I have reached them and found them empty. No longer will I postpone any element of living. Work and rest, love and service, pleasure and purpose, all shall make today illustrious. I will be a spendthrift of my living. I will not hoard my life for a tomorrow that may never come, or that may need, when it comes, a life quite different. My best preparation for tomorrow shall be—today. Lord, grant me forethought, for—today. Lord, grant me hope, for—today. Lord, grant me ambition, for—today. Strength for the tasks next to my hand, love for the dear ones that touch my present life, joy for immediate pleasures, sympathy for sorrows I now see—Lord grant me promptness in living. I yield myself to thee—now. Do with me what thou wilt—today. I reserve no power, no plan, no interest. I centre myself in this moment, and dedicate it to thee. So with each instant, my Father, my life shall be complete. So, at any time, my Father, I shall be ready to be called to thee.

3. On Sights.



Y petty grief over the slights men put upon me—Lord shame me from it by a reminder of the great indignities thou hast suffered at the hands of men.

Grant me eyes far-sighted to look beyond the vexations of the moment, yet keen to read my brother's love beneath his brusqueness. Grant me the hunger for divine approval, that feeds on men's scorn rather than on men's praise, unless their praise is thine. Make me a citizen of heaven's happy independence. Free me from the chains of self-love, that prostrate my spirit at the feet of other men. When I have done my duty, let me find in that my crown. Teach me that when men slight me, if I deserve scorn, I am to be blamed; but if I do not deserve it, they are to be pitied. Let me not judge them, but sternly judge myself. My allegiance is to God; I will not serve men's mouths. My Judge is in heaven, and will not have mortals to sit with him in judgment. What despite I do him by bowing in human courts! How do I slight him by making it possible for men to slight me! The rebukes of my brother may be thy rebukes; then let me fall down before them. They may spring merely from the evil in his heart; then will I stand erect and thankful before thee. Do thou set my tasks. Do thou award my praise. And let my desires be toward thee alone.

4. On Winning Kindness.



QUICKLY as the mirror answers the sunshine, so quickly are loving words answered by loving eyes. To find kind friends, I have only to be kind, and to be surrounded with lovers, I have only to love those around me. How small a price to pay for how great wealth! When I test my friend with criticism, we are both unhappy; when I try him with love, he never lacks, and I am always satisfied. Yet I long for his love, and wait for him to give it, instead of getting it myself. Why should he seek me rather than I seek him? Which is nobler, to create love or receive it? O thou God who art love, while I will bless thee for all the love thou dost send me, yet I pray thee for power to draw love to myself. I pray thee for unselfishness, for joy in others' joy. I pray thee for sympathy, for sorrow in others' woe. Help me to win the cheery smile, the open face, the sunny eye. Widen my horizon, enlarge my occupation, let me live also in the lives of my friends. Let me strive for love as if I alone could gain it, and praise thee for it, knowing that thou alone canst give it. When others are unkind, help me to be doubly kind,—once because they the more need my kindness, and once because I need theirs. And if with thy help I cannot win love, I shall learn the more to honor thy great love, which is pressed so freely on me.

5. On Sickness.



IT was hard, my Master, to be active in thy service, but it is harder yet in thy service to keep still. Out of thy thirty years of waiting while on earth, teach me, too, Lord, to wait. Out of thy centuries of waiting before the year of Bethlehem, teach me, my Father, to wait. Out of thy patience with human fretfulness instruct me to be patient; and from the eternal years that lie before me wherein I am to work and learn and attempt and accomplish, bring me, I pray thee, eternal Father, the sweet serenity that befits an immortal soul. I should smile at a day's sickness if assured of a life-long health to follow it. What is this sickness of mine, though it prove life-long, but a day in eternity?—a sad day, but a strong and happy eternity. What if I were able to manage vast factories and mighty organizations? Lying here I can manufacture and organize for myself all that I could ever hope to carry from this world—my character. What if I had strength to reform empires, to vivify Christendom, to bless in countless ways the poor, the ignorant, and the suffering? Lying here I can do all that the strongest man could do—I can do God's will. Holy garden of Gethsemane, into which my Master has led me, teach me the lesson thou hast heard from him. Nay, I am not here alone. Blessed victor of Gethsemane, lead thy weary one into thy con-

quest. Hold my hand in the thickening shadows, in the doubts and fears and anguish. Hold my hand, while beneath the olives rises, if it be thy will for me, even the Place of Skulls. And lead me forth at last in thine own good time to a glorious ascension day.

6. On Accomplishing Something.



ORD, this piece of work is thine and not mine. I thank thee that thou hast used me as thy tool to make it. I bless thee for its completeness, and for the satisfaction I find in it. How pleasant has been this task in which thou hast wrought with me! I have taken thy time for it, and so have not been hurried. I have taken thy strength for it, and so have not flagged. I have taken thy promises for it, and so have not been fretful or fearful. O wouldst thou thus do all my work with me! But indeed, thou wilt. Indeed, thou hast offered to. Indeed, thou hast urged thy help upon me. And I have gone pettishly and surlily off alone, scorning partnership with the Creator of the universe. Forgive me, almighty Helper, for my weakness thus is sin. Forgive me for my failures, which thus are double failures. Henceforth I will undertake no task to which thou canst not go with me. I will ask, regarding my work, what thou wouldst like to have me do, and not what I would like to see done. If I do not do my best, I shall grieve; but not if I do not succeed, for that is not my part. I will so work that thou canst rest in me, and I will so rest from my own work that thou canst work through me. And thus thy yoke will be easy, and thus thy burden upon me will be light.

7. On Ambition.



MY days are slaves to days that are not yet and may never be. Longings for many goods are rendering my life evil, and desires for imaginary pleasures are driving out the real ones. So bent am I on what I hope to be that I am not half what I might be now. God has given me the present, and reserved the future to himself; but I grasp at the future, and resign the present to Satan. My ambitions, that should be cords to lead my actions, are cords to bind them. I would be praised of men some day, forgetful of thy praise, O my Judge, whose alone are crowns that outlast the instant. I would get me wealth, that has no wings for heaven; and ease, that mocks at the needs of thy children; and power, that is a bubble. Forgive me, great Creator and source of all wealth and power and leisure. Forgive me, and heal me. Heal me of my blindness, that blots out eternity with this bit of mortal life close pressed. Heal me of my fever, that insanely seeks to spur thy providences, as if an ant should bid a man be quick. Take from me the ambition that weakens, and give me the ambition that makes strong. Ambition to know thee, in whatsoever ways thou choolest to disclose thyself. Ambition to be—not my best, but thy best. Ambition to attain—not my mirages, but thy goals. Ambition to sit still, if stillness be thy work for me. Ambition to

keep silent, if speech be not thy design for me.
Ambition to do nothing—my way. Ambition
to do everything—thy way. Oh my Father,
help me into the ambition of the angels and of
thy Son!

8. Hopefulness For Others.



ORD, as I trust thee for myself, help me to trust thee for my dear ones. Thou art greater than any evil that can befall them, stronger than any sickness, and more powerful than any weakness. While I work to help them, grant me the assurance that thy help is at work. While I pray for them, let my prayers be healing both for me and for them. My fears wrong thee as much as they harm myself. I say with my lips that thou doest all things well for those who love thee, and my furrowed forehead gives the lie to my pretended faith. How wilt thou answer such faltering prayers? Lord, wherein I fail in trustful courage, do thou not fail in mercy. Thou wilt not let any weakness of mine hinder the coming of strength to my dear ones. Thou dost not answer prayer by the might of the man who prays. With the belief that I have thou wilt heal my unbelief. Into all my doubts and worries thou canst breathe peace. Send that peace into my soul, dear Father—the blessed Spirit promised by thy Son. And with him send the confident knowledge that thou art planning far better than I could plan, and working good far more effectively even than my longings can imagine. I will do what I can. I will not trust in anything I can do. I will trust in thee.

9. On Patience.



HOW unworthily of my immortality do I bear myself, and how like a serf of time, when my impatience cannot wait a year for a result, a month for a reward, or a week for a promised blessing! Thou dost not blame my ardent desires, dear Father. Thou dost rejoice in earnest seekers, in eager claimants of good. The energy of thy zeal outruns my heartiest pursuits. But with thee is no fretfulness. Thy mightiest desires are knit to perfect peace. To thy clear eyes a thousand years are as a day, and a thousand failures as an instant of repulse. Thou dost live in the successful eternity. Draw me there with thee, O thou Prince of peace and patience! By daily proofs of thy loving kindness, by the unfolding of thy wise designs, by matchless surprises of joy, shame me from my distrust. Remind me that my folly knows not how to plan nor wisely to desire, but finds its only safety in being led. Remind me that tomorrow holds thee, even as today, and holds, therefore, all of today's beauty and strength and joy. Teach me that thy postponement of happiness always enlarges it, if I will be enlarged by the delay. Convince thine impatient child that a thousand years of waiting for a blessing do not impair the blessing, because thou art not impaired. Grant me the faith that exults to be tested, and the peace that is not in bondage to any event. Lord of all fulfillment, lead me to rest in thee.

10. On Bringing Others to Christ.



BLESSED Father, thou hast shown Christ to me; help me to show thee in Christ to others. What does it profit me to gain my own life in thee if those lose thee who are dearer to me than my own life? Forgive me, Father, if even the thought of heaven without them seems a dreary thought. Thou hast created our human loves; thou wilt know how, in heaven, if it must be, to sweeten the sorrow of all loss and separation. But O, forbid that there should be any separation between me and my dear ones! And if it should come through my fault, could all thy infinite resources remove the sting of it? All-wise One, who spake as never man spake, add eloquence to my tongue, that it may persuade others of thee. Upholder and Comforter of all, who hast promised never to leave or forsake thy children, help me worthily to illustrate the doctrine of Christ. Blessed Sacrifice, who didst give thy life a ransom for others, teach me what giving of myself may win others to thee. Thou only Lover, who so loved the world as to die for it, who art thus suffering, daily and hourly, the sins of thine erring children, lead me into the power of thy crucifixion, lead me into the fellowship of thy sufferings, that I may lift thee up and draw others to thee. Grant me thy winsome peace, thy joy that attracts, and thy strength that holds. Dear Master of men, save my loved ones and me together into thy heaven of love.

11. On Nature in Heaven.



WHY do I think of the life to come after so ghostly a fashion? Surely it is nothing vague, since God is nothing vague. It may be mysterious, but who can comprehend the mystery of this present world of ours? It will not be foreign to us, if we are at home with God. Indeed, while Christ is preparing for us our abiding place, surely he will so prepare it that we may not be startled, or homesick with strangeness, or ill at ease. Does not God show in this world what he delights to create? He is infinite in resources; yes, he need never repeat a design or a material; and yet all his works that we have seen witness of one steadfast spirit that is not fickle or fantastic, but looks steadily on man that man may come to know it and conform to it. God, who exults in fashioning matter here below, dealing so deftly in form and color, solid and liquid, warm and cold, perfume and texture—that same Artificer has fashioned heaven. Will he have lost his love for flowers, and kingly trees, and singing birds, and tinted clouds, the ripple of brooks, the firmness of the rock, the freshness of green grass? Will heaven preserve memory, only to make it an alien in a foreign land? In the natural world God does not create and then destroy, in order to please his shifting fancy with a change of scene; will God destroy nature itself? Yet what am I, thus to question the All-wise? It

is for me in this world to acquaint myself with God, and I shall be acquainted with heaven. Let me be no stranger to him, and no place in his universe will be strange to me. For this world is like God, and the next world is like God; help me, loving Father, into likeness to thyself.

12. On the Disapproval of Others.



WHEN others condemn me, but my conscience does not condemn me, my troubled heart condemns the Lord of heaven. By my sadness I am convicted of choosing the praise of men rather than the favor of God. Why should man's injustice vex me, while thou, my Father, art just? or man's unkindness, while thou art kind? What matters it, if my heart hears thy "Well done," though all the voices of earth cry out against me? But all earth's voices do not cry out against me. It is for the harsh words of one, the unjust thoughts of two, that I let my heart be troubled. My joy in the Lord of all creation is overthrown by the unkindness of a few of his creatures. For shame, weak soul; be strong in thy Lord. Trail not his banner of happiness in the dust at the bidding of this and that. Thy peace is seal of thy loyalty, the perfect peace of those that are stayed on God. Thou must forsake Him to lose thy peace. Dost thou hold a single frown so close to thine eyes that it shuts out all the smiling heavens? Do thy thoughts so seize upon and repeat and magnify a brutal word that thou art deaf to the song of the angels? Oh, shame upon thee, my soul, thou craven. Forgive me, joyous Christ, who dost wish to be served by happiness; forgive me, and help me into thine unconquerable peace.

13. On Plans.



BLESSED Designer, who art always contriving joy and never sorrow, whose delight it is to fashion sweet surprises for thy children, let not my blind and passionate purposes turn thee from thy better plans. So many times thou hast thwarted my wishes in order to bless me indeed; let me learn the lesson at last. For every joy thou hast given me as an answer to prayer, I must count it as another joy that part of my prayers have not been answered. Father, thou knowest best. My dearest desires are but enmity compared with thy desires for me. The joys thou hast wrought for me put all my joys to shame. Father, thou knowest best. What need have I to tremble lest I miss this happiness, that satisfaction? That I recognize it as a blessing is proof that even lovelier things are in store for me, since God has always been better than my wishes. And so, dear Father, forgive thy foolish child for many things, but chiefly for this, that my wild and importunate petitions distrust thee. Thou knowest best, and thou lovest best. Better than I love myself thou dost love me, even as thy knowledge of me is truer than my own. Grant me thy grace to walk straightforwardly, doing thy will in all serenity, trustfully leaving to thee the issue of my life.

14. On Covetousness.



WHEN I fall to an unhappy comparison of my lot in any particular with another's, let me consider, rather, whether I would exchange the sum of my life for the sum of his. And if on the whole I would have my fortune not otherwise, surely it is foolish for me to quarrel with the items that make up the whole. Others have more wealth, lives less harassed by care, tempers sunnier, graces more winsome; but my very defects and insufficiency have led me to my sweetest joys, so that the best of my life would have been lost had I bartered away what I thought the worst of it. How prone am I to forget, O thou my Sufficiency, that in having thee I have all things! Others have not "more wealth, lives less harassed by care, tempers sunnier, graces more winsome," when I have thee. Thou dost supply all my defects, and fill out all insufficiency, when I have thee. But so intermittently I have thee, my abiding Wealth, that envy poisons for me my friends' excellence, and covetousness darkens this fair world for me, and I go like a gloomy beggar through thy rich realms—and mine. What more should I wish than to have thee, and just such life as thou dost send me? Alas, how much more I do wish! Forgive me, unwearied Giver, for all my graceless longing. Teach me to be content, save wherein thou art dissatisfied with me. Against the shallow lights of weakening

desire let me set the clear shining of thy love. That will take to itself all that is good in those, and pass them on to me, while yet it hides them with its splendor and its peace.

15. On Undeserved Joy.



HAT have I done, blessed Giver, to deserve these joys? I have frowned at thy providences and distrusted thy ways. I have raged when thou hast sent to my desires most merciful failure, in order to satisfy my desires. My tears have blasphemed against thee. My fears have shrunk from thee in the darkness. My very cries to thee have been half defiant. And now thy smile has driven away, with the darkness, even the memory of fear. And now thou hast spoken, each syllable golden with blessing. And now thy sage providences have transformed every tear into a diamond, for a crown. I must receive my joy with awe and trembling, remembering my unworthiness. And how may I become more worthy of it? By accepting thee with thy gift. Thy love sent it; may it bind me to thy love. Thy wisdom devised it; may I win thy wisdom through it. Thy faithfulness will maintain and perpetuate it; let it lead me into the steadfastness of my Father. Lord, thou hast taught me by sorrow how to learn of joy. That stern school shall glorify this sweet one. The very unworthiness thou hast chosen to bless, with all its failures and errors, its doubts and impious despair, shall make me more worthy of blessing. Help me to pluck from the infidel cowardice thou hast crowned a new and kingly manliness. I rejoice that my desert did not win for me my

joy, for then my folly would soon lose it for me. All is of thy love, dear Lover of men. Thou hast showered upon me blessings undeserved; hear now my prayer, and make me more deserving.

16. On Submission.



WHEN I let the Lord have his way with me, I see how I have been impeding the work of his Spirit. My most stammering words are fruitful when the Lord has his will with me. My failures are more prosperous than my ordinary successes, hesitancy becomes zeal and doubt becomes assurance, when the Lord has his will with me. The clouds break away into shining, life is all glorious with promise and freighted with fruitage, and I have my will with the world, when the Lord has his will with me. Alas, for contrary events, that prove my contrary mind! It is not God's will that fails, but my willingness. Seal of my manhood, this power to oppose myself to the universe; seal, alas! often, of my degradation. Marvelous Creator, that can fashion a creature to oppose thyself! Presumptuous creature, that dare oppose thy Creator! Lord, by the many fulfillments of thy promises, promises half apprehended, fulfillments half acknowledged, teach me to yield to thee. By answers that shame my unbelieving prayers, by rewards that dwarf my efforts utterly, by promptings often spurned and pleadings combated with folly, teach me to yield to thee. By the collapse of my unsupported strength, by the failure of my unaided attempts, by the folly of my own best wisdom, teach me to yield to thee. I will cease from my power that is

weakness, and get me the power of the Almighty. I will cease from my own planning and my own upholding, and get me the wisdom and love of the Lord. I will lose my life in God altogether, that I may begin to live.

17. On Disclosing Love.



ORBID, Father, that I should bear in my heart any love that I hide from the loved one. There is so great need of love in the world, and the love that is is so unequal to the need. Let me not hide my love as a miser hoards his gold; nay, rather, as a careless spendthrift throws his gold into a corner for the rats. Men hunt for diamonds; shall I reject the most valuable thing in the world when it has sought me out? Men arduously cultivate music, but here am I scorning the very soul of music. Men die for glory, but here stands at my door the queen of glory, and I trample her diadem in the dust. Infinite Lover, by the love I bear to others I touch thine own infinity. Let me exult in it. Let me wear it proudly and gladly, as token of my more than royalty. Father and mother, brother and sister, dear friends, all that I love, pardon the great wrong I have done you and myself. I have trusted to the life to express what eyes and tongue and loving caress should also have expressed. And because these were dumb, even my life has often lost the language of love, and the beautiful spirit has flown to a kindlier home. Help me, loving Father, to win it back. Thou who dost always make thy love manifest in beautiful ways, be with thy servant's tongue and make it eloquent of love; be with his hands that they may warm to affectionate greetings; and be with his heart

that it may forget its sullen indifference, and ever seek new ways and better ways of showing forth its joy.

18. On Finding Christ.



WITHOUT thee, Lord Jesus, was not anything made that has been made. Yet passions have been made, whose excess is wretchedness and ruin. And poisons

have been made, poisons of the body and of the soul. Earthquakes and tornadoes, pestilence and death, have been made, turmoil and death to the spirit as well as to the flesh. Yet without thee was not anything made that has been made. When I think how thou didst walk the earth, Lord Jesus; with what lowliness and tenderness, with what sympathy for suffering and longing for our joy, with what power over nature and with what regnant love for men, then I am indeed happy in the thought that without thee has nothing been made that was made. O blessed Creator, who in passionate affection for men didst form all creation, how have men darkened thy counsels and distorted thy designs! How do men compel thee, who wert in all things as blessing, to be in many things as condemnation! Lord, help me to the optimism that sees thee everywhere. Thus far alone may I gaze on the evils of this world, that I may discern the Christ that is in them. Thus wilt thou glorify to me my difficulties, worries, and pains, by disclosing to me what of Christ is hidden away therein. In joys I readily see thee; if I can see thee in sorrows, I shall see thee everywhere. Thou shalt be to me interpretation of all mysteries and solution

of all dark problems. Help me to find thee in
my griefs, that I may lose my griefs utterly and
forever.

19. On Selfish Sorrow.



WHEN I think with what complaining, dear Father, I chafe against my petty troubles, and how, all over the world, haggard men and pale-faced women are bearing fearful burdens with a smile, I wonder that thou dost not indignantly exchange my lot with theirs. Forbid that I should longer study my woes and others' joys. For every sorrow of mine I can find scores of nobler souls with heavier sorrows. How greatly does God shame me in this, proving at once my weakness, to which he tempers his discipline, and my ingratitude. How greatly in this do I shame myself, convicting myself of selfishness, whether I be glad or whether I be sorrowful. Lord, thy chastisements, nobly borne, are the epaulets of thine army; but I have trodden mine in the dust, and have had no eyes to see the higher, stern honors of others. Dear Jesus, I do not weep enough, as thou didst weep, over the sins and griefs of men. My life is none the happier for failing to note their troubles; I only have more tears to spend on my petty woes. Let me live in thy wide sympathies, all-loving, all-pitying Saviour. Then the agonies of those who starve and whose dear ones hunger, then the heart-broken watchings by beds of long sickness or sudden death, then the despair of ruined lives and of those whose hearts ache thereat, the horrors of prison, the worse horrors of con-

science, the terrible emptiness of doubt, the unutterable misfortune of a hardened heart—then all these pitiful woes, so common, so unregarded, will inspire in me a very passion of gratitude for my blessed lot, and a manly helpfulness of others. Grant me this entrance into thy sorrows, blessed Lord, that I may come also to the knowledge of thy joys.

20. On Discoveries.



SHAME upon me, that I permit others to see so much more in my dear ones than I myself have seen! So cold is my heart and selfish, so incredulous of good, that the very beauty and nobility of my own household another must discover for me, and with bowed head I must receive my slighted blessings from the hands of strangers. I will go on a voyage of discovery about my own home. I will find out—I, the first—its love and its self-sacrifice, its grace and power, its wisdom and good cheer. Shame upon me, that I permit others to anticipate my knowledge of my friends, that men must point out to me the faithfulness of this one, the modesty of that, the unselfishness of another, though I am daily with these friends. Lord, touch my eyes, that I may discover men! Shame upon me, that the artists, and the poets, and the patient men of science, must introduce me to my own fields and woods and roadways, my own sunsets and trees and flowers and birds. Have I not ears and eyes and a mind of my own? I will explore my little world, so that I may show it to strangers, not they to me. Shame upon me, that others must disclose me to myself! They force upon me duties to which I am reluctant, they entice me into recreation that I think I do not need, they warn me against errors of which I have no fear, and thus they prove to me powers and

needs and weaknesses I had never suspected in myself. Thy Spirit within me directing me, Lord, help me to discover myself ! Shame upon me, that even God's presence in my own life must be shown to me by some other life ! His voice, speaking to my conscience, I hear when my friend overhears it and repeats it. His smile, brightening my life, I recognize when my friend congratulates me on it. His tender love, that chastens only to bless, I understand when a friend interprets it. O God, help thy weak child to discover thee ! I will no longer be so tamely satisfied with my narrow world, poisoned and foul with self. Thou hast reserved for me a wonderful, new world. Be thy strength my caravel, and thy wisdom my compass ! Breathe upon me with thy Holy Spirit, that bloweth where it listeth ! Direct my voyage to what enlargement thou hast planned for me, that I may set up thy cross upon its shores, and call them San Salvador !

21. On Joy's Privileges.



OD has sent me this happiness for some purpose; why is it? Or is it not simply because he loves me, and wishes me to be happy? My Father does not bribe me by happiness to do my duty. It is enough for him that I am joyous, without harnessing my joy to some task. God is so good to me. Thou dost not dole out my pleasures, loving Father, or measure them off as rewards, a pleasure to a deed. All my life sings with thy love, so full and so overflowing. But if my joy has no duties, yet it has privileges and powers. Let me prize above all other joys the power my happiness gives me to make others happy. O the force of peace and good cheer! O the might that lies in a happy heart! As the strong men of old held themselves recreant when not using their knightly strength in saving and protecting others, so may I with this spiritual power thou hast given me. I will wear my joy as a Crusader's shield and sword. By it I will be strong to slay the sorrows of others, to let light into soul dungeons, to break the chains of the spirit. Loving Giver of all joy, forbid that I should shut myself up alone with my happiness, to gloat over it in selfish secrecy. Thus would I miss my joy's better part, joy's multiplying reflection from other lives, joy's proud privilege of service. Thus would the very force of my bliss waste away to weakness, and thus seal-

ing up the strength of my happiness I should
deal it in its coffin. Be mine a living, growing,
loving joy, akin to God's joy that keeps the
world in health.

22. On Purity.



ORD, rid me of all thoughts that I would not write on my forehead with indelible ink. Thus my thoughts are written on my soul, for thee to see—for all to see, some day. O cleanse my soul, thou pure One! What I hide from the world do thou disclose sternly to myself, and terrify me with its hideousness. Because I am not pure in heart I cannot see thee in thy loveliness, but show thyself in thy terrible power. Drive out the devils, and sweep from my soul all their beastliness of thought and deed; and O, bring in the angels of whiteness and strength! Crowd upon my mind now holy thoughts, and thoughts of peace and wisdom. Press on me the remembrance of all saints, whose stainless lives have put to shame the foulness that assailed them. Remind me of martyrs and heroes that have not yielded to death what I would yield to a passing fancy. Let the precepts of thy Word rebuke me; let the upbraidings of conscience rebuke me; let my own admonitions of others rebuke me, and set above all rebukes the perfect life thou didst live, assailed with all that assails me, and combating temptation with no power that may not be mine. Fill me with horror at the evil that colors all beautiful things with its own vileness, and grant me that purity to which all things are pure. Deepen, blessed Christ, my love for thee and for all that is like thee. Make it

so passionate as to control all other passions,
so joyous as to sway all pleasures, so strong as
to hold absolute dominion over weakness. By
thy light and thy love lift me from all unclean-
ness, as the sunshine lifts the raindrop from
the mud.

23. On Eternity.



TERNITY is so long, so long, and so short is my time to prepare for it. If a million years formed but a letter of a volume, the universe could not store the books

that eternity would write. Did one leaf on a tree hold the history of this world, all the forests of earth could not contain the history of eternity. Were the mighty universe annihilated but an atom in a million years, it would all be gone ere eternity had fairly begun. When I think along the future to the uttermost stretch of imagination, I have but crossed the border line of eternity. Oh, eternity is so long, so long, and my time to prepare for it so short. Nay; but this time of preparation is also a part of eternity, and there is no more of God in all the infinite reach of the ages than in this moment, nor if I should wait and watch forever could I find God more loving and more helpful than he is eager to be now. It is my distance from God that parts me from God's eternity, and makes the thought of it seem strange and terrible, as if it were not all around me now. What would that strangeness and terror become throughout an eternity of separation, if the very thought and expectation of eternity is rendered fearful by it? O draw me near to thyself, dear Father, now as I begin my never-ending course. I shudder to think how a slight deviation would be magnified by the prolongation of the ages. I re-

joice as I think that steady faithfulness for but a little while will fix my line forever parallel to thy wise and loving designs. And so I bless thee that this time of preparation is so short, and that the peaceful, masterful eternity is unending.

24. On My Wealth.



AY Heaven forgive me for the times when I think myself poor! Then I am poor indeed, when I ignore my abounding wealth. Riches of inspiring tasks whose monotony even is fruitful. Riches of kindly opportunity for all I would do or be. Riches of love, hidden treasures that beg to be discovered. Riches of prayer, riches of thought, riches of speech, paltry investments that yield a marvelous increase. Riches of enjoyment to which all God's hosts pay tribute, the dew-drop, the library, the stars in the sky. Riches of sorrow, that wean me from meaner wealth. Riches of success, that make me walk erect. Riches of failure, that are lifting me to the stature of Christ. Earth is so full of my possessions that they overflow into heaven, and add to all my riches a wealth of hope and faith, a joyous expectation of the life to come. Father, as I exult in my abundance of goods, let me not be abased in a proverty of usefulness. My wealth is so great that only thy great help can suffice to administer it. Forbid that I should ever have the presumption to wish it greater. Forbid that I should ever have the shame to wish it less. As thou dost increase my debt to thee, increase the loving faith that pays the debt. As thou dost widen my life, narrow my dependence, that safely it may rest in thee alone.

25. On Foolish Wishes.



LET me consider how many of my most eager desires I would willingly receive at this moment. Would I not shrink from the changes involved in them? Would I not hesitate to accept them, and doubt the wisdom of my petitions? If I were compelled to receive the satisfaction of my longings, am I sure that I should not be dismayed? I fear that in God's judgment day my desires will rise up against me, so insincere and groundless are they, though real enough to make me wretched. The deep satisfaction I find in God's manifold mercies and the rare joys of existence, why do I hide it, even from myself, covering it all with a phantom discontent that becomes my true and shameful life? O convict me of happiness, my Father. Disgrace me with proofs of my well-being. And if in no other way thou canst make me content, force upon me the most foolish of my desires! In any way, in thy good way, disclose to me thy perfect love, so clearly that I will cease to have desires, with such authority that I will let thee plan my life. What shall I do for thee, O Christ, that I may cease to worry about myself? Grant me the joyous greatness that finds forgetfulness of all desires in fulfilling the longings of others.

26. On Routine.



AYS—and months—and years, days—and months—and years, in the same round of tasks, however fruitful and pleasant, yet the same, and ever the

same. Father, I shrink before the weary prospect, and come to thee, whose tasks are unending, so stretching out, from unimaginable eternity to an eternity ahead, that they dwarf my longest labors to the work of an hour. Yet this boundless toil has no terrors for thee; thy spirit does not swoon at the frightful prospect, but bears its burdens cheerily as we our joys. Thou with whom a thousand laborious years are as one day, wilt thou not spare me the little bravery of patience that would suffice for my petty tasks? But are my tasks more brief than thine? With no eternity behind them, yet they reach into the eternal ages. For though thou hast hidden the next life from me, my Father, it is no sad life of sloth, since thou art good and wise. Thou workest hitherto, and we shall work. Let this thought be the cure of my weak complaints. Since work is immortal, how dare I be on bad terms with it? Since work is immortal, why need I fret about it, fume and worry, and reckon up the weariness of it? Since it is thy choice for thyself, be it my glad choice for me. Teach me how to break from my tasks their fetters of time, and lead them out into thy large spaces. Teach me to exult

in their rythmic tread, days—months—and
years. days — months — and years, because
they keep step with thee.

27. On Sloth.



AN it be that I, with my fickleness and sloth, am akin to the steadfast Creator? How marvelous the perseverance of nature! Matter is swift and constant, prompt and active, until it gets a soul. Only men go fitfully and tardily under the sun. If here, in God's zealous world, I am thus slovenly and remiss, what shall I be in the spirit land, ungoaded by cold and heat, and grass and sunshine, the beauty and the energy of nature? What more could God do to show me how to work? His industry is constantly before my eyes, vast and unceasing, comprehensive and yet minute, with no hesitancy or delays; but I am a heedless scholar. Those labors seem too far beyond me to be examples for me, so little do I trust God's promise that I am to be co-laborer with him, so unworthy am I of kinship with the one Worker. Yet, Father, I know thy patience with thine apprentice. The very models thou dost set before me, that so appall me with inconceivable diligence, assure me that thou hast the power to teach even the dumbest of scholars. And thou wilt never leave me, though thou leave the ocean and the soil. Even more fully than thy power inspires these, to my despair, it will inspire me, after these have perished. For the spirit thou hast given to men alone can understand thy labors, and love thy work. And though all eternity is thy school, dear

Teacher, guide me speedily into the secrets of thy power, through patience and self-denial, through faithfulness and prayer, and through the grace of thine ever-working Son.

28. On Showing Forth Christ.



WITHIN thy church on earth, Lord Jesus, I have found my helpful friends; why do I not help others to such friendship? In its services I find continual inspiration to higher thoughts and nobler living; shall it be only for myself? Healing has come to me for my past transgressions, and armor against future assaults of the evil one; are healing and armor for my wounds alone? How do I advertise religion to those outside the church? As something not worth mentioning? As something that creates selfishness and permits indifference? As something that is timid, hesitant, fearful of men's opinion? Not thus should one illustrate the richest joy, the highest trust, the deepest wisdom, in all the universe. Words about money-getting, and no word for thee. Words about books, and no word for thee. Words about a thousand trivial events, and no word about eternal things. How little I have said for thee, O Christ! How little I have sacrificed for thee, O Christ! How few have I led into thy kingdom of power and peace! And have I really found entrance there myself? Or am I not lingering on the borders, with this sloth, and apathy, and inconstant zeal? If so, enter into my soul with condemnation, mighty Lord. Convince me throughout my being of utter wretchedness, and strike me with the merciful terrors of thy judgment. Convict me of weak-

ness and misery without thee, and so disclose to me the marvelous surprises of thy power and joy that my life shall be no longer half a life, but, lifted into the fullness of thy peace, I may draw my friends up with me.

29. On Receiving Rebukes.



WHEN my friends rebuke me, or criticise me, let me humbly consider whether God is not speaking through them. Let no petulance of man toward man lead me to reject what may be God's command, uttered through man. Let me remember that the seemingly harsh word comes from my friends, and is probably as painful for them to speak as for me to hear. Then let me love them for their corrections, even as I revere God in the same. When I think of what I should be, and of my many sins, I bow my head in shame. But when another lays loving, stinging hand upon my conscience, I am grieved and angry, as if I had not confessed my sins to myself. Lord, have I confessed my sins? Or is my self-humiliation, and the clearness of vision with which I think to examine my life, all a mockery and hypocrisy? Should my spirit chide itself as full of faults, only to chide another who in kindness points out a single error? For failing zeal and faltering industry, for harshness of tongue and of thought, for gloom and passion and despondency, for selfish indulgence and selfish neglect, for professions poorly practised, for feeble faith and unworthy fruits, forgive me, loving Father, merciful Saviour. Speak to me often of my errors and my sins, through the spirit within, but especially through the more effective warnings of my friends. Help me to the modesty that can

learn, the humility that can be taught. Draw me so close to thee that no correctings shall seem exterior to me, or more harsh than if my own will had prompted them. And thus, by whatever discipline is best, instruct me in thy strength and happiness.

30. On Goals.



THAT my days were bound together by one long purpose, compacted into strength by some great design! But each day takes its orders from the last, and so the weeks plod on, treading a blindfold way, they know not where. The world's heroes have seen before them ever some guiding star, some single lofty end to be obtained, and thus they have taken straight aim through the trivialities of life, and their direct path has been glorified by one unswerving ray. But I am tossed here and there by mocking tasks, till I stagger like a drunken man in the confusion of them. I obey blindly their imperious calls, and am too busy living to plan my life. Why did God place in me the desire to do some single worthy deed, and then smother me in petty duties? Ah, how do I know that God gave me that desire? I shall read God's plans for me in the tasks he has sent me more safely than in my cheating wishes. O Father all-wise, thou hast made it impossible for me to plan my life; do thou plan it for me. Do thou direct it, by a path that some day I shall see to be the best, through all this chaos of duties, to some lofty goal that will justify them all, and unite them all. Yet what am I, to ask for this? What right have I to ask God to will this great thing for me, when I do not yield to his will in little things? O Father all-wise, let my life remain formless, if it be thy will. Let its path wander

without purpose, if it be thy purpose. Be it my goal, then, to live without a goal, dependent each hour on thy present Spirit for the direction of the next hour. Thus, indeed, shall I live closest to thee, and closest to thee is happiest and best.

31. On Animal Spirits.



ATHER, why hast thou made the careless ways of the carnal life so very beautiful, and spread a seeming gloom over the sombre path of thoughtfulness? The sparkling eyes, and the merry laugh, and the bubbling song, born of gay spirits that live in the moment, are yet so lovely that a scholar of the eternities envies them. Their fresh charm makes meditation seem morbid, and self-examination appear self-conceit, and even prayer a sad hypocrisy. Yet light-hearted laughter, and thoughtless gayety, the beauty of this world and the pride of life, are not evil, though they produce evil in me. Let me not blame them, but rather myself, when my desire for the lower joys darkens the upward way. Lord, I will not be satisfied with an allegiance thus easily lost. So disclose to my eyes thy beauty that they can look with joy and not with discontent on all things beautiful besides. So fill my heart with thy joy that it dare receive inferior joys, nor be weakened by them. So bind me to thee by meditation and prayer that no handclasp may draw me aside, but may rather draw my friend to thee. Rebuke my waverings with thy steadfastness, my foolish desires with thy satisfactions, and master me so thoroughly that I may be mastered by nothing else.

32. On God's Pleading.



WHEN next I am perplexed with business, or assailed by doubt, or wearied with toil, or half persuaded by sin, let this remind me that the God who created me will not so destroy me as to withdraw himself from me. When my eyes are opened, they read everywhere the sweet secret of his presence. In the great world, intricately sustained by one pervasive power; in the entreating influences, rank above rank, that strive to lift me into higher life; in joys and teaching sorrows; in the blessedness of labor; in love that borrows heaven; all about me and within me God speaks; and shall I not talk with him? O the hardness of my heart, as if a child should seal his stubborn lips for days and weeks against the eager voice of his mother! O the folly of my heart, as if an ignorant child should suddenly scout the teachings of a wise father, who would make him his companion! O my hypocrite heart, that cheats itself with a wordy pretense of prayer! Thou who hast drawn me up so far from the dust that I can see how far I am from thee, let me not perish half way. The successes and joys and escapes and satisfactions, the things for which I pray, I would count all of them as nothing compared with the praying to which they persuade me. I see that my whole life, so far as it is worthy, is only an apprenticeship to prayer. Blessed Spirit, in whom abide all good and happiness, acquaint my spirit with thee.

33. On Day Dreams.



GAIN I have fallen to dreaming, building my life quite different from God's plans for me. Truly, though his providence holds in store for me precisely the things

I have dreamed, God will not wish to make such joy the sequel of weak discontent and slothful imaginings. An unmanly occupation, disheartening the day for its pressing toils by loitering along paths of fancy where pleasures are to be plucked in unreal ways, without care and long labor. Let me count each dream a defeat, destroying by its dalliance the very strength that might have given it being. Let me withdraw my fancy from these unrealities, that it may beautify my common tasks, and make my desire run to them. Yet it is hard to give up my dreams, so beautiful are they, and I have made them my home so long. Have they not pictured an inspiring goal? Have they not cheered the hardships that came, with their gleams of coming delights? Will not life be cold and stern without them? Ah, roving heart that dost so do despite to the Father who is with thee, making thy preferred home among the husks of cheating dreams! What beauty has the future that God has not now? What incentive to action does thy fancy offer, that God, in the present fields of duty, does not present to thee? What delight of perfect dreams is comparable to the satisfaction of perfected work? O thou All-

wise, whose present thought and act are strong enough to hold within themselves the prophecies and dreams of worlds to come, help me to so full use of what I have that I may live in thy contenting sufficiency, to which the present day is as a thousand years, yea, every passing minute a millenium.

34. On Longings for Heaven.



ACH year the spirit world grows dearer to me, enriched with so many souls I loved and honored; it grows dearer, but comes no nearer. Blessed voices are lost out of my life; they are speaking somewhere, but I do not hear them. Precious faces have been frozen by death; somewhere they are warm and bright again, but they do not shine on me. The crowded earth is strange without them, but the heavens are not more homelike. O that I could rend apart this imprisoning substance, flesh, wood, air, light, whatever thing and all things that clog my ear and blind my eye and dull my touch against the spirit world! To be so near the life I must enter soon and so many dear ones have entered already, yet know neither it nor them! On God's errands they must fill the seemingly vacant air. They must bend over me at my tasks. They must watch my sleeping, and walk by my side through many waking hours. In countless ways they must move upon my life, and I cannot touch theirs. Yet God dwells in both worlds, and God knows best. I, who live so poorly in the realm of matter, may well be spared entanglement with a second world until I have better learned this. I, who valued them so slightly when I could see and hear them, would speedily grow indifferent were they restored to my senses. With my longings for sights and sounds from behind

the impenetrable veil, surely I am preparing myself poorly for the death of the eye and the ear. O my Father, who dwellest here even as there and there as here, teach me to be at home in thy will. Then, I know, all heaven with its dear ones will be brought near me even now; and then the spirit world will be a homelike place to me when I enter it, for thy will is to be done in heaven as on earth.

35. On Praising Others.



HOW ready I am to receive men's praise, to count it deserved, to gloat over it an hour or two, forget it, and hunger for more; and yet how slow I am to give that joy to others. This praise I accept, so much of it unmerited, will avail me little toward God's true-sighted approval, compared with the merited praise I give to others. Loved ones whose patient tenderness is as a soft pillow to the head, friends unselfishly thoughtful for my good, fellow-workers whose faithfulness is no less deserving of applause because it does not expect it—what am I that these should laud me for trifles, while their whole life's devotion goes unhonored? True, my heart praises them, when it glances from self-contemplation. True, my lips move in compliment, when I think a return is due. But O thou Judge of all praise and Inspirer of honor, teach me joy in others' merits. Grant that I may take pleasure in their approval because they take pleasure in giving it, but that much more I may rejoice in praising them. I would hoard up the memory of their perfections rather than of their applause. I would seek to know them rather than to be known of them. Help me to turn from the love of honor to the honor of love, even as thy Son sought no plaudits, but only sought chances of bestowing them. Saviour, rejected of thine own, who yet didst die for them, save me into thy love.

36. On Fearlessness.



ORD, I am not worthy to receive thee for myself; thou hast enabled me also to bestow thee on others. My own prayers are too weak to deserve the assurance of faith, yet thou hast granted me also to remove the doubts of others. By my trembling and stammering words thou hast made others strong, and strengthened me as well. What anointing of power thou hast poured on my beggarly service! Yet still I bear me like a beggar, and when thou dost set before me a deed to be done I look on the weakness thou hast crowned rather than on the crown of might thou hast placed on my weakness. Nay, I am the King's man, earth slave no longer! His herald shall speak words of authority. Let not the ambassador of the Most High tremble before men. I will be bold about my Father's business. Yet ever—be this my sincere and constant prayer, dear Father—do thou abash my headstrong pride with frequent failure. Warn me from my weakness by clear disclosures of it. Drive me by my defeats to thy victories. Do I seek thy glory only? Gloriously prove it to me by destroying my own. Yet I shall be exalted, for thou wilt work through me. Yet I shall be proud, as a subject of his king, as a child of his father. Yet I shall be strong, and masterful, and fearless; strong in the Almighty, masterful because full of my Master, and fearless before men because I fear thee, O Christ, Upholder of men.

37. On Conscience.



OW do I make mockery of thee, voice of my Maker! I force thee to silence, and interpret that silence as consent. I obey thee, then straightway and in the same matter disobey thee, taking from my obedience a cover for my treachery. I cultivate oblivion of my errors, but keep my virtues ever before me. Dost thou condemn me through feeling? I bid thee plead with arguments. Dost thou reason? I wait to be moved by feeling. I count it right to obey thee, yet I count it joyful to abide in sinfulness. In all ways and forever I palter with thee, that art so sincere with me. And I know the folly of all this, yet do the same. And my weakness grieves me, yet I do the same. And I long to walk strong and happy and upright with thee and thy God, yet day after day I do the same. Whence shall my will get power, and whence shall my heart get sincerity? Have I not risen, even from prayer, to defy my conscience? Long-suffering God of all patience, mercifully bear with my unworthiness. Pitying Christ, dispeller of evil, cast out my demons, I beseech thee. Holy Spirit of power, come to my aid. I have only strength to pray thee to do all things for me. Acquiesce not in my pitiable defeats; endure my deeds that insult thee; in spite of myself save me from myself. I will go forward and trust more manfully in God. Sound a battle-cry,

thou voice of God, my conscience ! A thousand defeats shall be forgotten, for God will give me the victory.

38. On Successes.



THE Lord has given me success; let me not make that success the occasion of failure. Let me not regard the greatness of the result rather than the greatness of God's aid. Let me not through self-conceit convert his strength into my weakness. If I cannot of myself conduct wisely the ordinary course of life, much more should conspicuous successes minister to my modesty. God works his greatest triumphs in nature with those elements that are most pliant to his will. So may I subordinate myself. Lord, make me anxious rather that thy way should succeed than that I should succeed. If thy way leads through failure, then let failure be my triumph. If thy way leads through sorrow, let me seek no other joy. O Christ, these words are so easily said, but so hard to live! How hard, thou dost know. By thy struggles in the wilderness, by thy tears and prayers upon the mount, by thine agony in the garden, by the battle that ended with "Thy will be done," by all the trials wherein thou didst prove to us God's loving sympathy with man, I implore thee to lead me along thy narrow path toward that union with the Father which thou hast promised. If happiness postpones that union, grant me sorrow; if victory hinders it, bless me with defeat; if it comes more readily through darkness than through light, in the valley of the shadow I will fear no evil. To these convictions conform my spirit and my life.

39. On Sleep.



IN sleep I yield my soul to God, to the pure and holy One who hates sin with an infinite hatred. How dare I submit to him a soul so stained and sinful? From sleep I expect to receive a body strengthened and delighted. How can I expect this at the hands of a God in whose service my body has been weak and reluctant? In sleep I am not my own, but lie prone before a Master whose I should be in my waking hours, but whom my selfishness continually offends. How dare I so carelessly cast myself into that stern presence? From sleep I seek to return with a freshened mind—that mind which went to sleep all wearied with sin and sinful worries. How long will God thus mercifully deal with me? Yet am I less in God's presence and power when I control my faculties than when I lose myself in sleep? Is not the God of my waking hours a God of purity and holiness, a stern God of justice? But he is a God of love as well; he has been tempted as I am tempted; he knows my frame; he remembers my feebleness; against my sins, with all of love's magnifying, he will set off my nobler impulses and my weak endeavors. Have I not a glorious right to trust him by night as well as by day? O for the love of God, then, together with the fear of him, let me maintain, for nightly yielding to him, a body meet for his pure abiding. Let me cleanse my mind of all that should

shrink from his midnight scrutiny. Let me so manfully submit my spirit to him by day that I shall not fear to render it back to him by night, or in the clear revealing night of death.

40. On Interest in Others.



HOW many times has thought for others redeemed my thought for myself! Beginning often from no interest in them, or but slight regard for them, my indifference has become shame and my carelessness has become love. Thou hast raised me from sickness, O Christ, by sympathy for the sick bodies of others. Thou hast removed my worries, O Christ, while I was abroad removing the worries of others. Yes, thou hast lifted from my shoulders the burden of sin, even as I stooped down to lift the sinful load from another. Poor grace in me, this sympathy and helpfulness, so meagre, sluggish, and cowardly; but thy royal grace has royally blessed it far beyond its deserts. How the lives throng about me—jostling eager interests, to which I am blind; hungry longings I never try to feed; needs that plead dumbly out of darkened eyes, and get no answer; joys that stretch out their hands for a comrade to dance with them, and strike against flinty walls! Shame, shame, and thrice shame to me, that I bury myself in my work and my life, while my living awaits me in this wider world. That world where thou art, blessed Lord, going about as of old, doing good. That world where graces grow, and gratitude blossoms, and love is fragrant, and strength wins height and breadth. That world where thought is vitalized, and purposes embodied, and ideals

incarnated warmly and forever. Into it, by thy power, I will spring, and whatever is worth keeping of my work and my life will follow me.

41. On Sensitiveness.



RITICISM finds me ranged at once against it. Thus, however modest my words, my feelings betray me, that I hold myself perfect, or that I am in love with my imperfections. Let me no longer cheat myself with this sham that deceives neither another nor God. Let my egotism stand unveiled that I may hate it. I have pretended to seek betterment, yet I repel it when it is thrust lovingly upon me. I have pretended to admire frankness, yet I dread it and shrink from it. I have desired my friends to be useful to me, yet I annul the chief usefulness of friends. No longer let me pose before myself as a truth-seeker who would base his life upon realities, but know myself a lie-seeker who would base my life on flattering falsehoods. I seek not the best I can be, but the best I can persuade myself that I am. And yet, O thou who art the living Truth, the shame I feel at my cowardly hatred of correction gives me hope of more manliness. What my mind deems right and desirable thou canst convert into the desire of my heart. Thou who gavest me the love of friends canst give me a love for their faithfulness. Thou who disclokest to me the beauty of nobility canst disclose to me the ugliness of pride. Thou who dost make me sensitive to this fault canst take away my sensitiveness to faultfinding. Lord, make me more manly and more brave to love the truth.

42. On Appreciation.



HALL I expect others to value me at my best when I rate them at their worst? When I suffer their love and friendship to glance carelessly from my mind, and when I brood over a harsh word or cold look as if that were my friend's, shall I be surprised if a moment's fault of mine blurs from their thoughts a year of faithfulness, or a single failure hides from them all my successes? Manfully let me seek from others nothing better than I render to them. When I shall have begun to prize the gold in my home, lavished on me till I hold it dross,—the strength spent freely upon me, the devotion poured at my feet, grief at my grief, and rejoicing at my joy, terror at my peril, and pride in my achievements—till I have become just at home, how can I deserve justice abroad? Till I learn to seek out with cheer and due honor the modest toilers around me, digging for their hidden excellences as men dig for diamonds, how can I expect men to delve beneath the poor surface of my own character? Ah! remembering how men do praise my petty triumphs and honor my slovenly work, let me hide my ungracious head, that stoops so seldom to do honor to the nobility of my friends; let complaint die in shame on my tongue, that moves so sluggishly to pay its debts to others. Thou who alone canst perfectly praise, showering from out of the unselfish love in which thou dost hide thyself, honor on all good and blessing on all true endeavor, teach me also to praise.

43. On The Swift Years.



IVE wings to my strength and my purposes, dear Father, that they may overtake thy flying years. Quicken my tongue to loving words, before the dear ones that should hear them have passed into the silent land. Speed my feet and my hands on loving errands, before the dear goals of such service shall be placed across the dark river. By the swiftness of the years that are gone teach me how fleeting are the years that are going. By the little I have done admonish me of the little I shall do, unquickened by thee. As I hope for a future without remorse, grant me a present without sluggishness. That joy may be fulfilled in me, help me to fulfill thy commandments. Thy time has no patience; it stays not, it admits no paltering, it holds out a hand and is gone. O, make me impatient with myself, blessed Lord, whose love never postponed, whose zeal never flagged. Seize me with thy Spirit, that I may heroically seize upon my life. May I love thee unto more eager love for others. May I serve thee unto more helpful service of men. I distrust my strength of will; too often have I planned and failed. I will trust in thy will; O, make me thine. Catch me up into thee, and then shall I be caught up into thy hurrying years, and my love and my work shall not be too late.

44. On Imitation.



HAT copies thou hast set me, blessed Master! The peace and order and beauty of thy natural world should win me from my unrest and fretfulness. The lofty examples of thy saints and heroes summon me to braver and holier living. And how, in the friends and dear ones about me, thou dost bid me, through this one, be pure; and through this one, be unselfish; and through this one, be affectionate; and through this one, be cheerful. Yet, when I imitate, many and many a time I copy evil rather than good. What if one of thy gems should catch up the shadows rather than the myriad-hued sunlight? Yet thus do I, answering a frown with a double frown, fault-finding with irritation, peevishness with worry, and selfishness with unkindness. Lord, help me to rise above the mirror's plane, that weakly reflects whatever is presented to it. I will keep thee ever before me. So lovingly and eagerly will I gaze upon thee, that wherever I turn, thy blessed image shall remain in my eyes. I will teach myself to see nothing but thee, and what is like thee. O make me strong, when I see thy likeness, to become like it! Cleanse my soul's mirror from its blurring films of selfishness and this world's greeds and passions. Soften and make it sensitive as a photographic plate, swift to seize thee and strong to retain. Create within me a hungering after righteousness, and satisfy, O Father, that hunger with thyself.

45. On Honesty.



AY I have grace to pay my debts ! Debts of love bestowed on me, for which I have given no answering love—obligations all the more binding because no return is required or even thought of. Debts of cheery smiles and merry songs and pleasant greetings—some to whom I owe these are beyond the reach of payment, being spirits of light above; and others so continually flood my life with gladness that I never can overtake the debt. For all things thou wouldst give me, too, my Father, and I madly refuse them, I am in debt to thee—for the talents I do not nurture, the blessings I will not receive, the power I will not entertain, the beauty on which I shut my eyes, and the safety I thrust far from me. For the kindly offices of friends, for which I have made no return, my debt is great; for hours and days spent idly or worse than idly; for the peace that follows prayer, so soon polluted by sin; for the years wherein I have seen thy favor and thou hast seen my frailty; for the age-long courses of thy providence, which I gather together so unworthily in my life; for mercies and memories, love and joys and pardons manifold, the living Saviour to be my Friend and the Spirit of life to be my Comforter—how can I be honest, with such vast debts unpaid ? I thank thee, Father, that thou hast paid all I owe. I rest upon thy love, that rejoices to forgive, and on thy justice, that re-

members my weakness. Help me to be true
and strong and happy this present day, trust-
fully leaving with thee all days beside.

46. On the Nativity.



WHEN thou wert born on earth, blessed Lord Jesus, with thee were born all answers to all doubts and perplexities of men. The hands of thy creatures, groping after God, touched a Babe's hands, and were satisfied. Widening out from that first Christmas Day I see a warm and fruitful light, disclosing to mankind the ever-present Father. Thou, to whose clear vision the future was as the past and midnight as noon-day, suffered thyself to be blinded with our darkness. Thou, whose hands could destroy a world and recreate it at a touch, didst bind thyself with the feebleness of our flesh. Thou, whose throne was the heavens and space thine abode, didst narrow thyself to a manger. Most marvelous of all, though sin and impurity, untruth and hate, were to thy holiness woes unutterable, pollutions we could not guess without thy purity, yet thou didst in all points suffer our temptations. May this day of thy nativity lead into the new birth myriads of those for whom thou didst live the life that was a death to thee, and die the death that brought life and immortality to light. In my own soul renew thyself, I pray thee, blessed Master. Let this Christmas Day that brought thee so close to men bring me close to thee. Let it teach me thy self-sacrifice, thy lowliness and heroism, thy purity that conquered all earth's sin, thy love that braved its

gloom. While the bells ring and the songs
are sung, my heart shall sing thy praises and
worship my wonderful Saviour.

47. On Heaven's Glories.



IF earth is so surpassingly beautiful, how beautiful must heaven be! Colors, brilliant or delicate; wooded mountains transformed by drifting shadows; forests mirrored in quiet lakes; the birds' morning carnival; ocean's majestic march of lordly sound; the sunlight, the snow, the sky, the violet—God, who made these for man, what must he make for angels? And God's world is so full of interest, too! Each season wins us with a different story. Nations play for us their mighty dramas, and every life that touches ours has a joy or a sorrow to thrill us. God has taught man to build for himself a palace of marvels, that astounds its architect at every turn. If this house the creature has contrived is so ingenious, how must the Creator have filled with interest his many mansions! Yes, and this world is happy. Love is in it, love that is worthy of heaven. Courage is in it, good cheer, thankfulness and sweet content, friendship hearty, and sympathy, and brotherhood. Earth has the mother's song, the lover's kiss, the father's prayer. Earth has the laughter of children and the hymns of happy age. Heaven, that is to exceed the happiness of earth—how happy it must be! O my blessed Master, whose loving prayer it is that thy joy may be fulfilled in me, help me from thy heavenly earth into thy wonderful heaven. My soul shall be illumined with the

glories thou hast in store, and I will deem myself already in heaven, while dwelling in this world of promise.

48. On a New Year.



MAKE thou this coming year new to me, blessed Father, or it will be only the same as the old year. Renew to my faith thy promises, and renew my courage to seize them. Quicken within me the consciousness of thy presence. Let thy Spirit of great joy drive from my soul its old-time fears. They shall not dwell with me to befoul this sweet new year. Through its days I will carry, dear Father, the sturdy bearing of one upheld by the infinite. I will walk straight onward, thy hand leading me. I will look men frankly in the face, thine eyes seeing me. I will sing, I will laugh, I will rejoice through the year, the joy of the Lord being my strength. Draw close about me, if it be thy pleasure, the curtain of the future, so that I may not see beyond the encompassing day. It is thy future, and behind those dense folds are thine upholding arms. It will draw back before me as I move courageously onward, disclosing at each step new proofs of thy wisdom and love. No evil will befall me, for thou wilt befall me. I do not ask thee for more light, or more strength, or more joy; I ask thee boldly for thyself. Father, through whom the new year comes, O come through it to me. My spirit burns within me for the vision of thee. I long to be freed from the frets of worldliness into the liberty of the world, the mastery of sense and of time that thou canst give. I long to know thee, that I

may know myself and others. Live thou in me, blessed Lord. Then alone shall I rightly live in thy new year.

49. On Dissatisfaction.



WHEN next I am dissatisfied, let me question myself thus: Am I dissatisfied with myself or with others? Is the cause of my unease, in myself or in others, removable or not? Have I done my best to remove it? And if I find myself ill at ease because of the natural order of things, I will cease a grief that dishonors my Father, who created that order in wisdom. And if I find that all my friends and dear ones have no wish but for my prosperity and happiness, I will fall back to examine my own heart. And if I find therein no sinfulness as touching this matter, I will cease my weak repining. For what in all this world, O Christ, should disturb me save loss of love?—thy love and the love of my dear ones? And what in all the inner realms should disturb me, O Christ, save loss of love?—my love toward thee and toward men? Inspired by this from within and upheld by this from without, how do I yet betray it by my frowns, and poison it by my fears, and stab it by my base unhappiness! Conscience pleads for cheeriness, but feeling links hands with despondency. Reason argues for hope, but feeling flies to seek despair. O soul of mine, thus insanely bent on the disease you loathe, flee for refuge to Him who is health because he is joy! From moodiness and fretfulness, Christ, be my Saviour! Deliver me from gloomy imaginings and from

self-made misery. That all may be well with me, teach me to see when all is well. Content me with the real things, and turn my mind from shows. With thine approval, if only thou canst give it, O my Master, exalt my depression to an ecstasy of thanksgiving, and shame to silence my querulous fears. Awaken me into thy likeness, O Christ, and I shall be satisfied.

50. On Other-World Helpers.



DEAR ones, who have entered on the higher life that is to come, some of you I know through the loving talk of those that knew you, and others I myself have watched up to the mysterious brink. You have gone into a larger world, whose largeness includes this. You have inherited higher faculties, not to lose any of the lower. You have entered on wider tasks, so wide that our human tasks form but a corner of them, yet still a corner. You have ascended into higher helpfulness, and whom could you better help than those you have loved and still love? O spirits of the dead that live with God, you are living also with me! Your clear sight sees my invisible dangers. Your pure souls tremble as I yield to my temptations. Hands as real as any of earth, and far more tender and strong, are stretched out to help me over all hard places. Dear Father in heaven, thou wouldst not have me forget my father in heaven. Blessed Friend of friends, thou wouldst not have me forget my friends in heaven, nor dream that they can forget me. Come close to me, Holy Spirit of truth, and disclose them to me, with thyself. With these familiar faces make me at home in the spiritual world before I go there. Press upon me the presence of these pure spirits, to shame me into purity. Make them thy ministers of zeal and inspiration. Show to me my dear ones out of the spirit land, and bid them show me thyself.

51. On Providences.



ATHER, I thank thee that thy wisdom has heeded, not my desires, but my wants. I bless thee that thou art thyself, and hast hindered me from being myself.

I praise thee for the dispraise of men, that has sent me to thee; and for my failures, that have driven me to thy successes. Alas, how foolish I have been, that thou must force thy blessings upon me. I have reared my own wishes on high, and shut out the vision of approaching joy. I have seen thee least when thou wert nearest, and heard thee least when thy call was loudest. And still, when I have been most impatient and foolishly reckless, thou hast been patient with me. And still, when my childish longings have reached out pettishly for some mischievous thing, thou hast freighted them with rare surprises of blessing. As often as I have proved myself weak to care for myself, thou hast proved thyself wise and strong and loving for me. And shall I not trust thee for the future, who hast rescued from sin and folly all my past? Father, be thou my future! Not that I would lose myself in thee, but that in thee I would find myself. Be thou my future, the strength and peace of my coming years, my praise, my happiness, my work, my love, my today and my tomorrow be thou, who art my only worthy yesterday! Praise be to thee, dear Helper of men. Glory and honor forever to thee, by whom alone I work

and win reward. And the song of my mouth
and the love of my soul shall be thine forever
and ever.

52. On Criticism.



THE criticism was foolish, rude, and unkind. My own conscience rejects it, and my sober judgment. But my vexation accepts it, and my worry over it honors it as much as my judgment and conscience could. Let me see in this how thoroughly I myself am ruled by my feelings rather than by my reason and my sense of right and wrong. And if I am thus ashamed of my vexation, and if my judgment condemns it and my conscience upbraids me for it, why may it not be thus with the one who has harshly and unjustly criticised me? May not he, too, be ruled by passion and by unreasonable emotions, and be struggling against their domination? Whether this is so or not, for thyself, O soul, bravely and indignantly assert thy rights in thy kingdom. Whose are the deeds of thy hands, the words of thy mouth, the thoughts and feelings of thy heart and brain? And to whom art thou answerable for the justness of these things? Bravely and indignantly assert His rights in thy kingdom. Where thou art sure of His approval, is it not treason to Him to entertain grief at man's disapproval? Where He has bidden thee to reign, is it not disobedience to Him to cast thy scepter, or allow thy feelings to cast it, at the feet of the ungenerous and scornful? Love all men, O my soul. Be quick to admit their true censures, and love them the more for

their righteous condemnation. Be eager for hints of betterment, and count him not thy friend who does not give them. And yet withal be self-contained, and hold within thy life a citadel of joy, whose keys are in the keeping of thy Lord alone. What He praises, that only is good. What He condemns, that only is evil, and shall make thee sad. He is thy Master; stand or fall to Him alone.

53. On Service by the Way.



ORBID, O Thou who didst go about doing good, that I should postpone serving my friends and dear ones until I have lost the power to serve them. While I wait to show my love on great occasions, others are proving far greater love on small occasions. A cheery face, carried about the streets today and around the home, will build up, by small accretions of blessings, a service that dwarfs the heroism I dream of. Kind words, thoughtful inquiries, sunshiny laughter, freely given at chance meetings with acquaintances, will help the world more than all the large endeavors I am brooding over. I seek a name among men—forgive me, Father!—while these kindly people win a name with thee. I mortgage a future that is not mine—Father, forgive me!—while I do not even own the present. Nay, with all my plans for heroism and large service I am fleeing like a coward from the hardest tasks. For I have tried to carry a cheery temper through the day, to scatter sunshine in dark corners, to bless others in the beautiful, unapplauded ways, and have retreated from my failures to the false comfort of my dreams. Not thus shall it be with me today. Do thou walk with me, strong Saviour of men, who alone art able to glorify little things. Be thou with my tongue today, that it may learn the eloquence of Sychar's well. Be thou with my hands,

that they may be taught to transform and magnify the petty loaves and fishes of my daily life. Above all, dwell thou in my heart, and all my living shall be glorious and happy, because thou hast entered into it.

54. On Borrowing Trouble.



It is treason to thy goodness, dear Father, to be anticipating evil while thou art always planning good for me. It is treason to my own powers to weaken them by fears that may be groundless. It is treason to my work to expend its energies on worry. Let me reach out my best toward the best thou hast always ready, and what harm or sorrow can befall me? I entertain care within, while thou art knocking at the door. When vexations present themselves, I run to meet them, while my servile imagination makes ready a large place for them. How do I sin against thy law of happiness! Thou canst not magnify blessings for one who thus magnifies troubles. Thou canst not bestow peace upon one who makes no war on unrest. I shall not have from thee any burden I cannot bear; I myself lay on myself the unbearable burdens. O God, who alone canst transform the nature of man, change the ingenuity wherewith I invent worries into a skill at discovering joys. Make strong my memory for pleasure, and weaken it for pain. Give me a genius for gratitude. Show me how far I stray from thee when I wander into grief. Show me the source of my unhappiness in selfish love of my life. Show me the remedy for my distress in love for others and for thee. Send what thou wilt, of joy or sorrow, but send me the health of thy peace.

55. On Comparisons.



ATHER, why should my blessings so outweigh the blessings of others, while my gratitude is so mean and inadequate? Every day my unmaimed body meets pitiable cripples. Every day my clear-seeing eyes look upon the blind. The hungry and the wretched throng about my comfortable life. Strong in thy sweet companionship I walk the streets, brushing by desperate men and pallid women. Above the depths of misery and sin around me everywhere, my existence moves in a glorious heaven. And yet I am gloomy. And yet I dare to be covetous. And yet I harbor the sin of discontent. Thousands have no friends, and I am thronged with them. Thousands know not what love means, and I am rich with it. Thousands are not blessed with work, and I am honored in mine. Thousands have no health, no home, no conscience, no God whom they know to love. And I—complain! O Father, forgive me, and help me to show my penitence by joy. O Christ, lead me here into the mansion of content, that I may be able to enter the mansion thou hast gone before to prepare for me. What have I to do with those that are happier than I? Should I envy them, when it is to my disgrace that I am not happier than they? Rather will I entreat of them their secret of power, that extracts, out of lives often far less favored than mine, a peace and a joy which I

have not. Yet already I know their answer. They will send me to thee, blessed Christ, Lord of all happiness! They will bid me live, as thou didst live, in the sorrows of others, if I would ever live in my own true happiness. They will bid me win appreciation of my blessings by striving to raise others up to them. They will bid me rear mansions of joy for the poor and sorrowful, and find therein my own palace of content.

56. On My Message.



Y heart holds what my brother should know, and is stung by it ceaselessly. The due words I refuse to say—they are poisoning me. Lord, grant me power to say them. What thou dost wish me to tell to another is no longer mine, but thine, and his. Against thee and him my silence is a crime. A moment with me may mean eternity to him. Ah, may not the lack of it mean eternity to me? Father, whose clear vision reads all the hearts of men, tear from my eyes the veil I have bound about them, and bid me see honestly myself and my friend's need. Frankly as I would have thee deal with me, help me to deal with him. Speaking the truth in love, let me trust that love to heal the wound truth makes. Speaking the truth in the fear of thee, I shall fear no result. Let me not cheat myself with arguments that my conscience will not ratify. Thy message may be spoken, but no messenger other than I can speak my message. Brooding over a duty may make my conscience morbidly sensitive, but scorn of duty will kill it altogether, and with it my soul. How am I preparing myself, O Christ, for thy heaven of open vision, where all men know and are known? for thy heaven where thought is speech, and feeling action? Help me here into sincerity, that thou mayst bring me there.

57. On Zeal.



OTHERS, long before they reached my age, have learned so much more than I, have done so much more for God and man. What fierceness of exertion, what intensity of zeal, can carry me over these half-used years, and place me alongside of my possibilities? O men and women of mighty love that moved thousands where I move one; of conquering brains that subdued continents of learning while I would master a county; of industry that seemed never to flag while doing all its work with splendid ease, am I never to catch up with you, but through ages of ages thus to lag behind, a camp-follower on your achievements? Well, well, what if I must? Let me remember that I am living to God, and ought not to work to man. Before both me and God's mightiest toiler stretches a boundless reach of time—so limitless, that we have both but begun our course. What matters it if this instant of beginning is more fruitful with him than with me? God does not measure me up against him, but against my powers, and my opportunity. Spirit of God, grant me the faithfulness that is oblivious of success, grant me the obedience that follows the commander and not the fellow-soldier, grant me the zeal that has no eyes or ears or hands or thought or feeling for anything but the work of the moment, whether it be speaking or acting, toiling or resting, warning or instructing or loving. Give me, day by day, my daily zeal.

58. On Self-Deception.



ONLY Spirit of truth, disclose to me myself! Let me not think that I love duty, if I merely love praise and ease of conscience. Let not prayer for virtues satisfy me, while I have not the virtues for which I pray. Let me not be proud of Bible-reading if I read only as a curious scholar, and not as a lover. Let me not rest content in my friendship while it builds me nothing but a palace of pleasure, and does not build up my friend in happiness and strength and peace. Let me not even take satisfaction in love until the love is like Christ's, that sought not to be ministered unto, but to minister. While thou dost make me see with clear vision my faults and sins, show me my virtues also, for my comfort and my strength. While I have true love for thee, however feeble; while I am trying to do the right, with whatever failures; even while I have grace to perceive my sins and mourn over them, let me not count myself a castaway. Lord, give me a straightforward, accurate, imperious knowledge of myself,—a knowledge that endures no lies and permits no equivocation; a knowledge that is not morbid or timid; an open, manly, sunshiny knowledge of my evil and my good. But with the disclosure of my weakness disclose also thy power. With my sins show me also thy forgiveness and thy salvation. With my virtues show me, far ahead of me, the perfection thou dost require. Let me not know myself unless I can also know thee.

59. On The Present.



SO much my thoughts play truant with the years to come. True, joys are there that will crown my most eager hopes. There are satisfactions for ambitions and results for labors, answers for prayers and compensations for hardships. But, while I grasp for the beautiful future, the beautiful present is slipping through my fingers. In this year I have dear ones that next year may take away from me. This year's tasks will never come again, with their possible joys of duty nobly done. Today's sunset is only for today, and the glories of this season's woods and fields will never be repeated. In the present dwells love, and never in the future. Faithfulness is in the present, and here lives peace. Friends are not to be postponed, nor books, nor home. My God is a present God. Father of all things that are, I thank thee for the joys thou hast in reserve for me; and I pray thee that they may only serve to glorify the present that leads to them. May the great successes I hope for dignify the small successes of today. May the love to come make me more loving now, the wealth to come make me more generous now, the friends to come make me more friendly now. Let not a noble future make me too ignoble to attain it, nor joyful anticipations destroy my practice of happiness. Help me, Father, to incorporate in today's living all glimpses thou dost give me of coming joys, adding them to my store of present strength and present inspiration.

60. On the Resurrection.



NCE dull barrenness and earthiness held all of my life, and that does not seem like life at all to me now. To go back to that carelessness all empty of God, to thoughts bounded by matter, to the petty plans of an hour, would be like returning to the realm of death that lies back of the gates of birth. Some day, after I have passed the second gates of birth that men call death, I shall find a new ecstasy of life, and shall think that I have been dead till then. What thought of the bird has the egg? What thought of the egg has the bird? Loam is the atmosphere of the worm as he crawls through it, and the sod is heaven. Will the air and the sky seem as gross to me, some day? O wonderful deed of my Lord, to shut himself up in this prison of death, as if the eagle should go back into the egg, the butterfly under the sod! O kindest deed of my Lord, thus to testify of sky to the worm, of wings to the egg! I know not what I shall be, loving Saviour, but I know that I shall be, and that thou art. Grant to my life the Easter transformation. Aid me to unwrap from my soul the grave-clothes of this world, fold them, and lay them aside. Out of thy forty days in the resurrection body, teach me to walk this earth in the resurrection spirit. Mine be the upward and the forward look. Mine, through these transient, be the eternal, years. And mine, on this shadowy earth, be the practical heavens.

61. On My Life Work.



AYS sweep by, and I have done nothing worthy of the days; and years pass, and my life work is not begun. Each day's tasks are part of no greater task, and so the years have no significance. I am doing no life work, but only a succession of petty minute's works. Is it a mosaic I am at work upon, confused bits of color near by, and some day will God hold it off so that I can see its ordered beauty? Or is it only what it seems to be, a clumsy heap of stone, painfully broken on the highway? Father, I know that if it is only that, it is thy highway, and I am preparing the way of the Lord. But I long to see it and know it. I long for the delight of a masterful purpose, that can subdue to itself my motley days, and reduce them to a symmetrical whole. I long for the distant vision, the lengthened outlook; for some worthier life than this that thou art giving me. "Than this that thou art giving me"—O Father, forgive me! I forgot that, if I am thine, my life must have a purpose as far-reaching as thy infinite plans, O thou to whom my longest imagination of time is as a day. How can I doubt this, if I am thine? Yet well may I doubt whether I am thy child, when I harbor such foolish desires. I may be walking on high places from which, if the view should be disclosed to me, I should grow dizzy and fall. I have trusted thee for eternity; I will trust

thee for time. Curtain my hours close about so that I cannot see beyond my present tasks. I will know that since thou and I are to outlast time, they also are to outlast time, and to reach beyond all curtains of fleshly sense. Small though I am, thou hast assured me of immortality, and small though my work is, it shall be immortal also. For this I bless thee, dear Lord of life and of labor.

62. On Flowers.



OD'S beautiful world should teach my soul to be beautiful. How finely fashioned in all points are the flowers! Every petal is outlined with grace, the inner parts are a labyrinth of loveliness, and the blossoms most hidden are as fair as those that flash in the meadows. If only my work could thus be perfected, without and within, so mastered and rounded that I should not care which part came uppermost! And the flowers are prized for their fragrance and color, God's seal upon his work that he loves it and exults in it. Where men would have called it done, the great Worker kept on, and won his most beautiful triumphs. O for the joy of doing things well, like that!—the satisfaction not merely of use, but of beauty! But God has infinite power, while I am so weak! Yes, and God also has infinite tasks, crowding and clamoring, worlds upon worlds; yet every grass blade is fit for the central shrine of a temple of beauty. My smaller powers, when he animates them, suffice as well for my smaller tasks. Let me be thy apprentice, God of the flowers! I will love my work into fragrance, and my heart shall give it color. I will make it true within, that it may also be true without. I will not stop with the world's applause, but work on and wait for thine. Perhaps, if I do my work well here, faithfully and well, some day, in some happy world, thou wilt let me help thee make the flowers.

63. On Conversation.



MY talk was dead and deadening. It held no healing sympathy for my friend's sorrows, no eager rejoicing over his happiness, no merriment, no ardor, no love. I know those whose conversation is a cordial, but mine is for both of us a slow poison, working gloom and fretfulness. And it is not my tongue that needs moving, but my heart. Before I can converse cheerfully, I must be converted to good cheer. Before I can enliven others, I must come to life myself. For every kindly deed my hands may do, my mouth may speak a thousand kindly words, and every word would be a deed. Alas, that so many words about brotherhood should have as brothers so few brotherly words! Alas, that my thoughts of love should not love loving speech! Alas, that I should choose higher ways of serving, and neglect the common, precious ministries of the tongue! Alas, that when sunny greetings are so cheap I should be so chary of them, and when a single affectionate sentence brings such rich interest that I should bury my talent in a surly mouth! I will love my brother more, that I may talk with him better. I will talk more with God, that I may more helpfully talk with men. As I would prepare for an oration by studying, so I will prepare for true conversation by living. That my words may enter other lives, my thoughts shall run before them into the joys

and sorrows of others. O thou who didst speak as never man spake, and whom all heard gladly, with thine own power consecrate my tongue to thee. Out of a heart jubilant with thy love, out of a life strong with thy force, let me speak with my brothers and thine.

64. On Discovering People.



THE more I know of God, the more I know of the people around me. How close must heaven be to earth, since an insight into spiritual things teaches us so much about this world! I am becoming careless of gold and silver. What matter they when one is growing rich in human interests? Travel is good, to see new lands and to find out unimagined scenes of loveliness; but no travel is so fascinating as a journey among the lives of men. He is rich who picks up a rare diamond in a mine, but he is richer who discovers a rare grace in his friend. With what I gain of goods my house is crowded and the world is crammed; but by what I gain of value and beauty in my friends, the world is filled and fulfilled. How cheap is this joy, how easy! All about me the earth is stored with kindness and love, sweetness and trust, faith and loyalty and self-denial. Every house is a mine. Only a tactful word, a brotherly hand-clasp, comradeship in eye and heart, and all this wealth is unlocked to me. O Christ, Friend of friends, Lover of lovers, teach me to find thee in these souls where thou dost dwell. May I hunger and thirst after their righteousness and beauty and strength. As I count it a shame not to know thee, so it shall be my disgrace not to know thee in them. How can I see the spirits of just men made perfect on high,—I, with eyes so dull to the beautiful spirits around me? Teach me by the discoveries of earth to make discovery of heaven.

65. On Living Praise.



PRAISE thee, O God, for the spirit of praise! It is the health of my soul. When I praise thee, I forget to praise myself, and so am not foolishly exalted. When I praise thee, I forget to blame myself, and so am not foolishly depressed. This gratitude destroys my doubts. In blessing thee for the past, I learn to trust thee for the future. Praise shall be more in my prayers. Nay, I will turn my very petitions to praise, since they are as good as granted. And praise shall be more in my talks with men. How can I praise God aright—I who do not praise men aright? As I would count that prayer a shameful one which left out gratitude, so let me think a conversation a disgrace to me if it has no praise or thanks. For I owe something to every one. Here, a sunshiny face has brightened my day. There, a cheery word has comforted me. Here, the simple inspiration of a strong, pure life has bent my being more firmly toward the good. And through all these it is God that is working. O how incomplete is my praise of thee, dear Father, when I do not praise thee in these who do thy work so beautifully! Baptize me with the Holy Spirit and with fire—with thy Holy Spirit of love, who rejoices to find good even in the meanest of thy children, my brothers; and with the fire of praise, that rejoices to declare the good it finds.

66. On Touching Noble Lives.



WHY do I let chance select my comrades for me? I would not choose my food by lot, nor my reading, the food of my mind; yet I take at haphazard my companions, who furnish food for my soul. I spent a half hour with Greatheart the other day, because he sought me out, and all my life since has been sweetened and ennobled. Why do I not often seek him out? Most men are self-seeking, slaves to this world, mockers at immortality, and when chance appoints my friends it is chiefly to these she assigns me; and I lose at their tongues my bravery and peace. God's noblemen are to be sought out, for they are few. They are busy, and cannot waste themselves on aliens. I will seek to approach them with a nobleness akin to theirs. I will be simple, as they are; manly, straightforward, and true. I will go untrammelled by this world's chains, of gold or hay. I will make myself like them, that their virtue may flow into me. And how can I do this, dear Father, except thou dost help me, thou who art the source of all nobleness, and the medium in which alone two noble souls can meet? Acquaint me with thyself, and I shall be acquainted with thy heroes, saints, and prophets. Let me know communion with thee, and communion with men will be full and easy. Set me to doing thy work, and I shall get close to thy workers. And for all

the blessed inspiration that comes from these noble lives, the comfort, the purity, the strength, praise shall be to thee alone, thou God of all helpfulness.

67. On Sympathy.



LAS for me, for I am more ready to give money than time, and more ready to give advice than love. There is my friend, to whom men go with their troubles, and he cheers them; with their sins, and he heals them. His life has become Christ. I admire it, yet how far am I from following it! While my impatience cuts short men's confidences, while my coldness chills their eager love, while my absorption in selfishness raises high barriers between me and them, how can I enter Christ's paradise of helpfulness? I am planning large things for the world, but neglecting the largest, which is sympathy. I am giving myself for God and for men, but in ways of my own choosing, not in the ways God chooses and men choose. A tender listener to my own sorrows helps me more than the shrewdest adviser, yet to other sufferers I seek to be a sage and not a lover. To feel that some one cares for me is better than to know that some one understands me. I do not need the uplifting hand so much as the encircling arm. Thus thou didst help men, blessed Helper of all, as they needed help and sought it, and not that thy glory might be enlarged or thy pleasure be done. So it became thy glory and thy joy. And the servant shall not be above his Lord. With singleness of purpose let me do one thing, but that one thing shall be to turn with swift willingness

this way and that, whithersoever thy voice,
speaking through men in need, may sum-
mon me.

68. On the Old Year.



BLESS thee, Lord, that thou wilt take this year of mine, sift out the chaff, and give me back the wheat. I put into it the darkness and the shame; thou, the glory and honor. But thou art ready to receive my shame for thy share, and give me for my share thy beauty. In thy mercy, dear Lord, rewrite the record of the year. Cleanse it of those sins which I now repent with loathing. Set me down as not rejecting the peace and power after which I now blindly grope. My heart knows not how to utter its great gratitude to thee. O, forget that it has ever known how to doubt. Help me to seal with my thankfulness thy many gifts. Help me to seal with a deep hatred of evil thy free forgiveness of my many sins. Help me to convert my failures into chastisements for my ambitions or my sloth. My hand, that through the year has linked itself to folly, I will place in thine. O, hold it tight. Withdraw me from the fascinations of thy world until I can use them as befits thy child. Make of the past year a college, and crowd its lessons upon me. Teach me when and how thou wilt, but be my teacher. Lead me into night or day, but be my guide. I can trust thee for the next year as for the old, but I cannot trust myself. Be thou myself, O Lord.

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